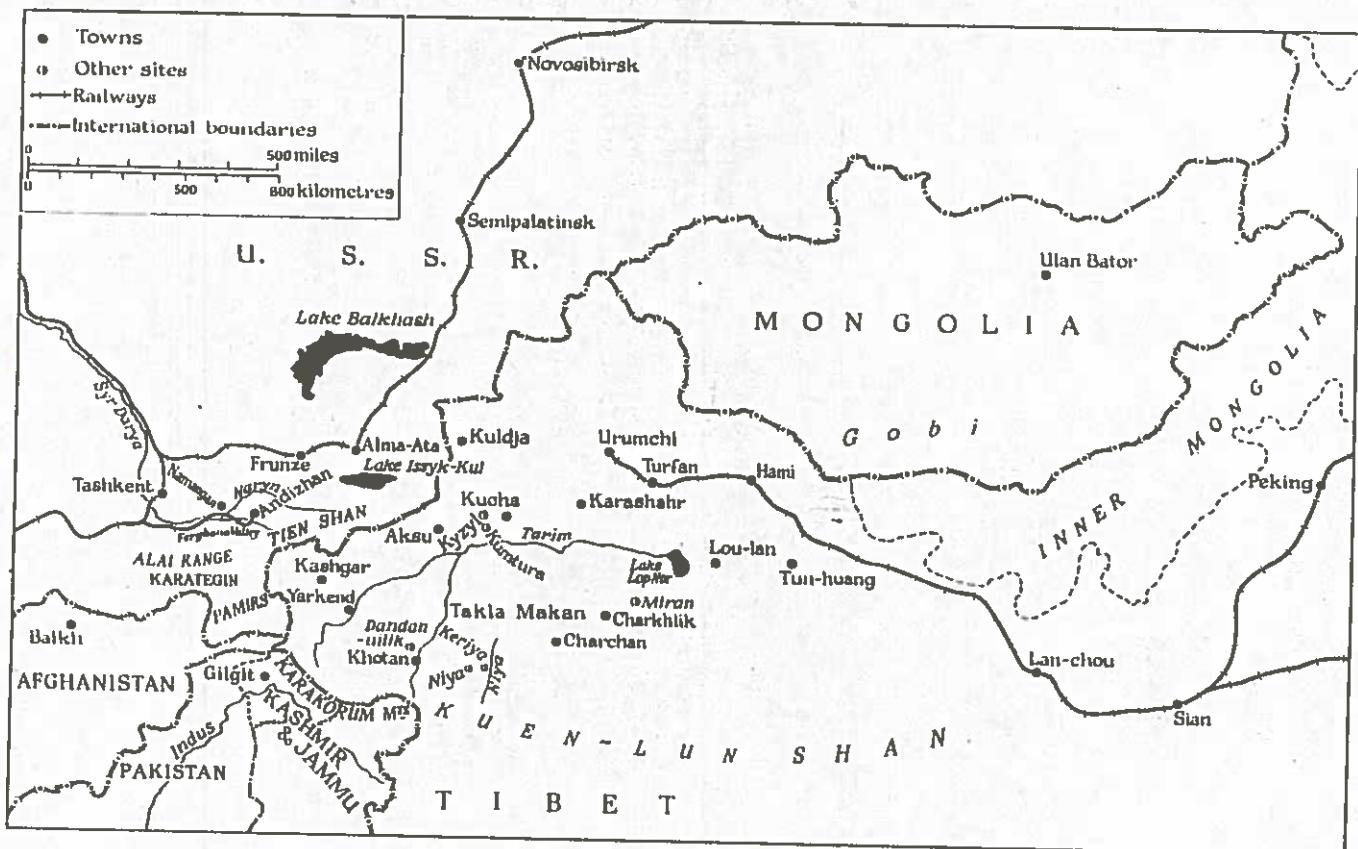


Knoblock?  
Central Asia



MAP NO. 8 Sinkiang

## 10 Sinkiang or Eastern (Chinese) Turkestan

WHEN EUROPEAN EXPLORERS AND GEOGRAPHERS had almost completed the survey of Inner Asia – in the last two decades of the nineteenth century – they heard rumours that somewhere in the deserts of Chinese Turkestan scores of fragmented remains of ancient civilisations had been found preserved, apparently, as well as those in the deserts of Egypt. Following this, numerous archaeological expeditions made for Sinkiang and in 1907 their efforts were crowned by Sir Aurel Stein's discovery of the 'Caves of a thousand Buddhas', near the village of Tun-huang. In one of these caves, walled up for nine hundred years, Stein found a huge library of scrolls, written in a number of languages and scripts, dated from the fifth to tenth centuries A.D. There was also, amongst other things, the oldest printed book in the world – a Chinese woodblock print from the mid-ninth century.<sup>1</sup>

Shortly before and after World War I, several French, German, Russian, Japanese, and, of course, British expeditions worked on the Sinkiang sites, but unfortunately their time ran short. In the early 1920s Sinkiang became a contested area between Russia and China, and the Chinese authorities were extremely reluctant to let foreigners in. After a brief spell of fame, Sinkiang fell again into obscurity. No scholars and no travellers were allowed to visit it, and as far as we know no work has been done on any site. After World War II, Russia was able to increase her influence in the area during the Chinese Civil War, and was even able to open several consulates. But with the rift between the two Communist countries the Russians soon had to leave again and Sinkiang became more inaccessible than ever.

However, in 1957 one Czech scholar, Professor Pavel Poucha, was allowed to undertake a major journey to Mongolia and China, and in particular to Sinkiang. He visited some of the known sites and gave his account of them in the book *Innermost Asia*, published in Prague in 1962. Unfortunately, he was a philologist and not an

<sup>1</sup>A detailed survey of the exploration of Sinkiang may be found in Dibbs, *History of the Discovery and Exploration of Chinese Turkestan*.

archaeologist, and therefore the value of his book lies chiefly in its eyewitness quality.

The oases of the Tarim basin formed a semicircular belt north and south of Tarim. The northern part consisted of Turfan, Karashahr, Kucha, Aksu, Addz-Turfan, and Kashgar in the extreme west. The southern belt included Lou-Lan, Khotan, and Yarkend, with openings south to the Karakorum passes (western Himalayas), and to India. In Tun-huang, in the east, the northern and southern roads coming from China divided to reunite again in Kashgar, in the west. According to Ptolemy, in one of the valleys of the Parurs, on the road from Kashgar to Balkh, there was 'a tower of stone, where the Levantine and Chinese caravans exchanged their goods'.

The Chinese first captured eastern Turkestan from the nomadic Huns in the first century B.C., and thus established their control over the Silk Route. In those times most of the country was inhabited by Indo-Europeans, of Iranian origin in the south-west (the Asian Scythians or Saka) and of 'Tokharian' origin in the north and north-east (the so-called Yue-che). The Huns pushed these Yue-che westwards and started a big migration movement which finally brought the Saka to southern Afghanistan, to the province of Sistan (which derives from Saka-stan), and the Yue-che to Bactria, which in some sources is called Tokharistan. This movement marked the end of the Graeco-Bactrian Empire. Strabo mentions the Tokharoi and the Sakaraulai among the tribes who defeated the Greek king Heliocles between 140 and 130 B.C. The Kushan dynasty was probably of Yue-che origin and their empire began as a federation of Yue-che tribes. When this empire reached the peak of its power, it clashed with the Chinese on the western frontiers of Sinkiang, at the end of the first century A.D. (see above, Chapter 2). By this time, in the later Han period, the dominance of the Tarim was again disputed between the Chinese and the Huns. The famous General Pan-Chao re-established Chinese control over the area. When some oases like Kucha applied for help to the Kushans who were their ethnic relatives, Pan-Chao was able to isolate the Kushan expeditionary force, which perished in the deserts of Kashgaria. In A.D. 97, Pan-Chao dispatched a detachment across the Parthian Empire to meet the Romans. The Chinese, frightened by the hostile reception they got from the Parthians, soon decided to return home, but their venture probably gave grounds for the otherwise unconfirmed legend that Pan-Chao's army pushed as

far west as the Aral Sea in pursuit of the Kushans. (Some sources even mention the Caspian Sea.)

Under the Han dynasty, when the Silk Route was firmly in Chinese hands, Buddhist religion, Indian literature, and Hellenistic art could take root in the Tarim oases. Indian missionaries followed this route when travelling to China to preach Buddhism. Graeco-Roman art came quite naturally with trade and religion. The southern road was probably used more frequently. Sir Aurel Stein found here, among other things, Roman coins of the Emperor Valens, Graeco-Buddhist bas-reliefs in the purest Gandhara style, Roman caskets, intaglios, and Indo-Scythian coins.

The civilisation of Inner Asia at that time may be divided into two distinct longitudinal zones: in the north we encounter the art of the steppe, nomad art *par excellence*, characterised by bronze buckles and parts of harness in animal style, with purely ornamental tendencies; in the south, along the Silk Route, across the double belt of oases around the Tarim basin, we find the art of the sedentary peoples, paintings and



123 Kyzyl. Fresco (first half of the 7th century)

sculptures directly inspired by Greek, Persian, and Indian art which was brought in and united by the Buddhist religion.

The first period of wall-paintings at Kyzyl – west of Kucha – is characterised by precise modelling, subdued and discreet colours, grey, brown-red, dark brown, and bright green, and may be dated from A.D. 450 to A.D. 650, approximately.<sup>2</sup> Indian influence is still dominant here, but Sasanian elements may also be found, especially in the dress of the figures. The second period is dated by J. Hackin as A.D. 650 to A.D. 750.<sup>3</sup> Modelling is less apparent, colours are brighter and Sasanian influence dominates both in the appearance and in the dress. In the military scenes, the knights of Kucha wear cone-shaped helmets, armour, and long lances reminiscent of Sasanian knights and, at the same time, of Sarmatian horsemen from the frescoes of Panticapaeum in the Crimea.<sup>4</sup>

South of Tarim there is the same mixture of Persian and Buddhist elements, particularly in the paintings on wooden panels found at Dandan-Uilik, north-east of Khotan. Female nudes reminiscent of Aiana, horsemen and camel-riders entirely Persian in their appearance, and a bearded Bodhisattva dressed more like a Persian nobleman all indicate both Persian and Buddhist influence. We may therefore conclude that before the conquest of the country by the Turkic tribes in the second half of the eighth century, the Indo-European oases both north and south of Tarim derived their culture from the great civilisations of India and Persia, and owed nothing to the civilisation of the steppes.<sup>5</sup>

Grousset has words of high praise for the society of Kucha in the seventh century.

This society, as we know it from the texts and frescoes of Kyzyl and Kuntura, seems a strange success, almost a paradox in time and space. It benefited from all the intellectual heritage of India, brought in by the Buddhist civilisation, and on the other side, used the caravan links with Iran to copy the material civilisation of Sasanian Persia. It seems like a dream, that such an elegant and sophisticated society could develop only a few days' ride from all these Turco-Mongolian hordes, on the border of all that barbarity, on the eve of being submerged by the most uncivilised of all primitives. It is a sheer miracle, that it could survive so long on the fringes of the steppe, protected only by stretches of desert and threatened every day by the raids of the nomads.<sup>6</sup>



<sup>2</sup> Grousset, op. cit., p. 91.

<sup>3</sup> Buddhist Art in Central Asia, India Society, 1938.

<sup>4</sup> Grousset, op. cit., p. 9.

<sup>5</sup> Grousset, op. cit., p. 92; Dabbs, op. cit., p. 119.

<sup>6</sup> Grousset, op. cit., p. 92.

While Kucha was mostly influenced by Persia, Turfan was more exposed to currents from China. Here the Indo-Persian elements gradually disappeared and merged with the cultural trends of the Tang dynasty. After all, Turfan was ruled by a Chinese dynasty from the beginning of the sixth century, but when the local ruler rebelled against the suzerainty of the Tang, a Chinese army occupied and annexed the oasis in A.D. 640. The Tang expansion westward continued, Karashahr and Kucha were defeated in turn, and the Indo-Persian civilisation was thus destroyed. Kashgar, Khotan, and Yarkand also recognised the supremacy of the Tang and the whole of Sinkiang was once again under Chinese rule. Karashahr, Kucha, Kashgar, and Khotan formed a Chinese defence-line called 'The Four Garrisons', but after the defeat by the Arabs in 751, the whole of Inner Asia was lost to the empire.

Turkish domination followed in Sinkiang. The Uighurs, originally a Turkic tribe from western Mongolia, appeared on the scene. They intervened in the Chinese Civil War, helping the Emperor Su-tsung, and were able to carve a vast empire of their own on the western fringes of China proper. Manichaeism, an amalgam of Persian Mazdeism and Nestorian Christianity, became their state religion, no doubt imported from Persia, when the followers of this sect were persecuted there by the Arabs. Nestorians came to Sinkiang most probably at the same time, and their colonies were the source of the medieval legends of Prester John.

In the ninth and at the beginning of the tenth centuries the Uighurs were squeezed out of Mongolia and came in great numbers to Sinkiang; up to the present day they represent the main element of the population and the official name of Sinkiang is now the Uighur Autonomous Republic. With the Manichaean religion the Uighurs also took over the Soghdian alphabet, derived from Syriac, and developed it into the famous Uighur script. This replaced the Turkish runic script of the Orkhon and was subsequently used by the Mongols of Chingiz-Khan and also by Timur, five hundred years later. Gradually, the influence of the Manichaean and Nestorian faded, and the penetration of Islam began. In the twelfth century the population was already predominantly Muslim by religion and Turkic by ethnic origin, and it has remained so up to the present day.

The site of Tun-huang lies 14 miles north-west of the village and contains 480 caves. There are wall-paintings, statues, painted ceilings,

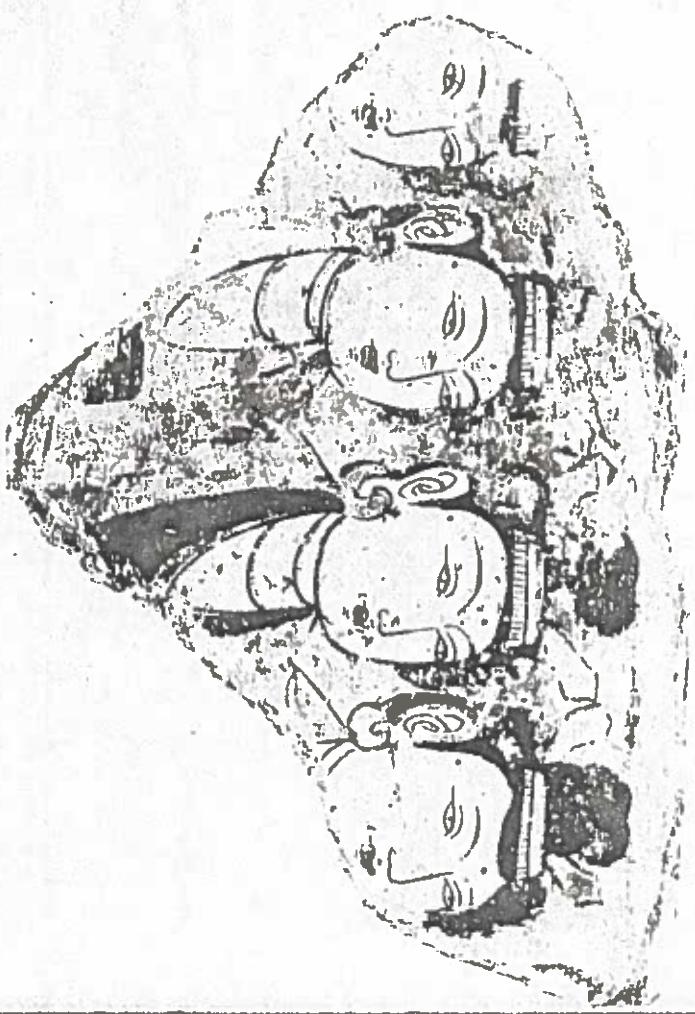


125 Tun-huang. Scroll painting. Oldest known block print (868)

and altars from the fourth to the fourteenth centuries, from the Northern Wei to the Yuan dynasties. One of the inscriptions gives the year A.D. 366 as the date when these cave-temples and shrines were founded. The caves of Tun-huang were known to Europe as early as 1879, when a Hungarian traveller visited them and later described them to Stein. Most of the buildings have now crumbled, no decorations from the earliest centuries survive, but in many caves there still stand statues of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas modelled out of stucco in Graeco-Bactrian or Gandhara style.

The iconography conforms to that established by Chinese artists of the first half of the fifth century. The majority of styles remain throughout predominantly Chinese, the Chinese element being the most clearly apparent in scenes illustrating the lives of monks and in the floral motifs.

In contrast, the draperies, poses, and facial expressions continue to be rendered with the severity which characterises the Graeco-Buddhist school.



126 Wall-painting of four female donors from Shorchuk (8th-9th century)

The walled-in library was discovered by a Taoist priest in 1900. He

was restoring one of the wall-paintings when he noticed that underneath the fresco (in reality tempera) were bricks, not rock. He knocked a hole into the wall and found behind a room full of scrolls. Seven years later he met Aurel Stein, showed him his treasure, and sold him part of it.

There were Buddhist religious texts from the fifth century, written in Chinese and in Brahmi; further Tibetan manuscripts; one of the oldest Tibetan chronicles covering the years 650 to 65; manuscripts written in the Iranian Soghdian language and Aramaic script; old Turkish Manichaean texts and also a Turkish book written in the Orikhon-Yensei runic script, etc. Shortly after, the site was visited by P. Pelliot and he, too, managed to obtain a large quantity of manuscripts from the same sources.<sup>10</sup> Poucha<sup>11</sup> says that when he visited Tun-huang, several

people were working on the maintenance of the temples and the protection of the rocks. He also quotes Chinese figures giving the number of sculptures in Tun-huang as 2,400 and the number of wall-paintings as one thousand. Highly praised are the small paintings on the temple ceilings, often depicting in a very lively way scenes from the everyday lives of ordinary people.

The oasis of Turfan is, next to Tun-huang, one of the most important sites in Sinkiang. Poucha<sup>12</sup> describes the journey of 130 miles from Urumchi, the present capital, to Turfan. An eighteenth-century minaret, Suleiman-Wang, and some domed *mazars* in the Muslim cemeteries are the only significant buildings of the Muslim period. In the ninth century this was a main Uighur centre, but now the impression is rather bleak, although the population of the town is seventeen thousand, of which about 80 per cent are Uighurs and only a thousand Chinese. The main city of the Turfan oasis in the time of the Tang dynasty was not the present town of Turfan, but a place called Idikut-Shahri (the city of Idikut – the title of the Uighur ruler). The ruins of the city, walls of palaces, and temples are clearly discernible on the fringe of the desert. The city walls with many towers are still partially preserved. There were four gates and the streets connecting them crossed in the centre where the mausoleum of the Uighur Manichaean kings stood. Poucha<sup>13</sup> thinks that all buildings here were religious, either temples or monasteries, and were built in Indo-Persian style. In the seventh to eighth centuries a remarkable series of portraits, now in East Berlin, painted on silk were produced here. They are described by Talbot-Rice:

In each case a single sitter was portrayed on a large silk panel in a hieratic pose, yet often shown holding a flower in one hand. The paintings combine physical exactitude with real psychological insight. Generally, only kings and soldiers of distinction appeared on these panels . . . certain items of their armour recall Assyrian models and others Gandharan ones, but those made of solid pieces of metal are obviously of local origin. The portraits foreshadow very similar pictures of far smaller size produced by Islamic painters in Persia.<sup>14</sup>

Poucha also describes cave-temples in Sengim Agyz, near Turfan, visited and explored by von Le Coq and Aurel Stein. They are now heavily damaged, by weather and sand, and by the iconoclastic Muslims. Only the ceilings are still well preserved. Wall-paintings were mostly

<sup>10</sup> Stavitsky, Bongard, Levin, *Abstracts of Papers*.

<sup>11</sup> Dabbs, op. cit., p. 132.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 133.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 142.

<sup>14</sup> Op. cit., p. 197.

taken down by the German expedition (cut off with a sword, according to Poucha).<sup>15</sup>

In the oasis of Karashahr the ruins of what is now called the city of Shorchuk are probably those of the ancient capital. The lay-out was similar to that of Idikut-Shahri. Shorchuk was a city of temples and shrines. Some domed structures in Persian style were tombs. Art objects found here by Le Coq were mostly in Gandhara style. Manuscripts written in the Indian alphabet were found in one cave-temple; many of them were in the Tokharian (Kuchan) language. The city was destroyed by fire, some time in the second half of the eighth century, but many of the manuscripts found here are older than that.

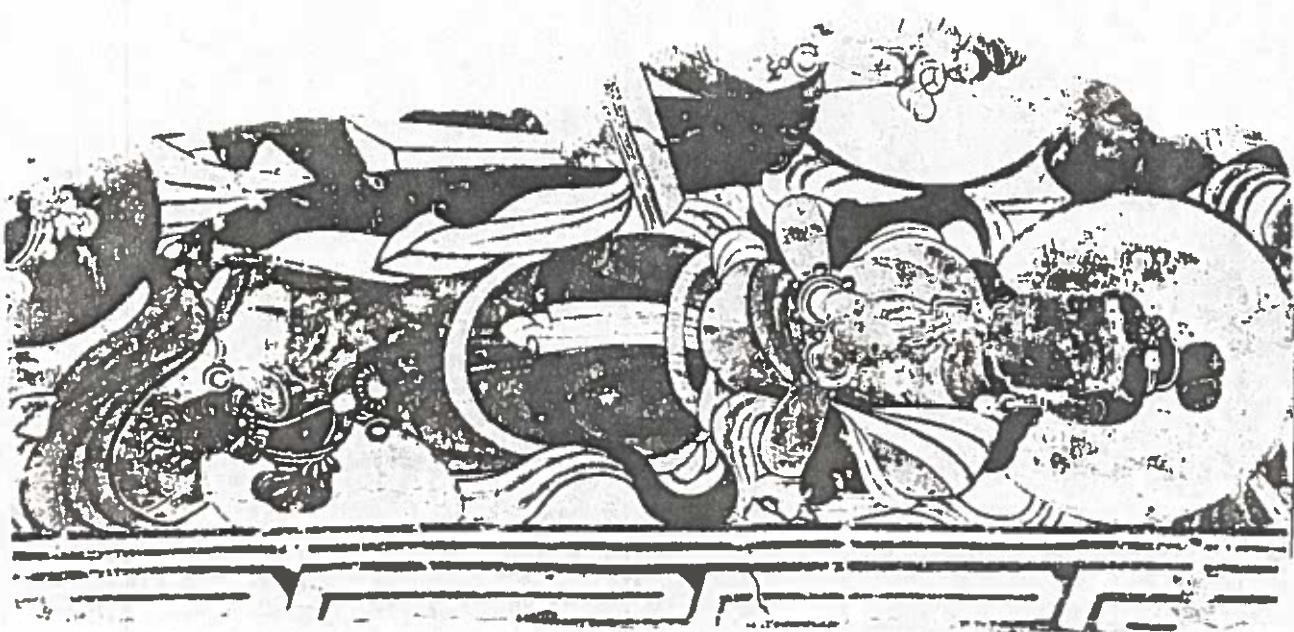
In Kumtura, 15 miles from Kucha, there are about ninety Buddhist caves with some inscriptions in runic or old Turkish script, in old Uighur and in Sanskrit, as well as in another unknown language. Everything else has been either taken away or destroyed. When a house was recently built in Kumtura, a chest full of papers with runic inscriptions was found. It was probably an old Turkish book, but the finders were so scared of charms that they burnt everything.<sup>16</sup> Poucha visited Kumtura, copied some of the inscriptions, and also saw the remaining frescoes, which were not taken away by Le Coq fifty years previously. One of them depicts a whole Tokharian family, four male and two female members, with typical dresses and arms.

Fifty other caves are in a place called Sim-Sim, 30 miles from Kucha. The caves at Kyzyl number 235. Some of the temples are 30 to 50 feet high and cut 50 to 60 feet deep into the rock. Not all the caves served religious purposes. In some were workshops, stores, and monks' cells. Each temple usually had an anteroom and behind it the shrine, where, near the rear wall, stood the statue. Wall-paintings date from the fifth to the eighth centuries. Other temples are domed as in Persia. Their paintings are older and show Indo-Iranian influence with some Hellenistic elements. In one of the biggest caves, Le Coq found a library with manuscripts on palm-leaves, birch-bark, paper, and wood, with texts in Sanskrit and Tokharian, all very well preserved.

Kucha, like Bamian, developed into a leading centre of Hinayana Buddhism and the earliest paintings to survive in the district, notably at Kyzyl, date from the first

<sup>15</sup> The Grünwedel von Le Coq Expeditions are referred to by Dabbs, op. cit., pp. 125 ff.

<sup>16</sup> Poucha, op. cit., p. 151.



127 Kumtura. Wall-painting of a Bodhisattva (8th-9th century)

century, whilst the latest are assigned to the eighth or very shortly after.

The Persian elements quickly supplanted the Indian, to be in their turn overlaid in the sixth century by the Chinese.<sup>17</sup>

Where Indian influence was paramount, artists took an obvious interest in such technical matters as volumes, contours, and relief effects, but a century later, their figural paintings became flatter and more stylised. This is ascribed by some authors to the influence of Nestorian missionaries, who instinctively worked in the Byzantine manner.

The biggest oasis in the Tarim basin is Kashgar, where in an area of 12 by 35 miles live almost half a million people; 150,000 of them live in the city of Kashgar. Several branches of the southern alternative of the Silk Route converged here with the northern alternative route. From here, one road led west, either to the Ferghana valley or south of it to the Karategin valley and to the Amu Darya. Another led south across the Kuen-Lun and Karakorum mountains to Gilgit and the valley of the Indus. Among Muslim monuments, Poucha mentions several mausolea - the Ak-Mazar, tomb of Jalal ad-Din Baghuddi, the *mazars* of Apa-Khoja and of Yusuf Kader Khan. Apa-Khoja is an important shrine with forty tombs, all adorned with blue glazed tiles and ornaments. It was built two hundred years ago. In 1864 the Sinkiang Muslims rebelled against the Manchu dynasty. An officer from Kokand, Yakub Beg, came to Kashgar in 1866 and within a few months became ruler of a state, which was duly recognised by Britain, Russia, and Turkey. However, in 1877 he was defeated by the Chinese commander and died shortly afterwards. The centre of his short-lived empire was the oasis of Turfan.

Driving through Yarkend (approximately 24,000 inhabitants) to Khotan, Poucha noticed the ruins of Zegerlik-ya, a town inhabited three to four centuries ago, but now completely abandoned. Khotan, 200 miles east of Yarkend, is as near to India as it is to Tibet, and these two civilisations have equally influenced its history. The ruins of ancient Khotan, dating back from the Buddhist period, lie in the desert, 7 miles west of the modern city. Not far from here is Dandan-Uilk, an important site, where Stein discovered wall-paintings of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, frescoes with legendary scenes, Chinese coins from the early eighth century, Sanskrit manuscripts, and other items, which proved that the place had been abandoned long before the arrival of Islam.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Talbot-Rice, *op. cit.*, p. 188.

<sup>18</sup> Dabb, *op. cit.*, p. 119.

230

Talbot-Rice writes:<sup>19</sup>

When the small eighth-century temple was excavated, the external walls were found to have been adorned originally with paintings which included figural scenes. One showed a group of youths riding camels and horses. Some riders are Chinese looking, others Persian and more particularly Sasanian. All have haloes to indicate that they are not only legendary but also holy personages. Dandan-Uilik was abandoned in 791, but in Tang times Chinese influence had made itself particularly strongly felt there.<sup>20</sup>

Not only was the Khotanese school strongly influenced by China, it was also highly appreciated there and Chinese artists were in turn influenced by it. It was also greatly esteemed in Tibet. Khotanese artists followed Buddhist monks there, bringing with them styles and traditions which they imposed on the Tibetans. All communities along the Tun-huang trade-route further east were profoundly influenced by the art of Khoran. In Miran, for instance, several monasteries were founded in the third and fourth centuries A.D. Many of their shrines were set up in caves, the walls and ceilings of which were covered with paintings. Miran's art stemmed from India and Gandhara, but it was of a subtler character than either of these and attached great importance to figural compositions.<sup>21</sup> Also, the Graeco-Roman elements probably came to Miran directly through contacts with the West. Miran's style and iconography were then adopted by Tun-huang and numerous other centres in the eastern part of Sinkiang.

Chinese documents found in Dandan-Uilik date from the years 781-90. Obviously, the Tibetan invasion which marked the end of the Tang domination in the Tarim basin was also the reason why these places were abandoned. Other documents found here were in Khotanese Saka language, written in the Indian Brahmi alphabet; some others were in Sanskrit. The Saka texts were mostly translations from Sanskrit and Tibetan.

In Muslim Khotan, which is now a town of eighteen thousand inhabitants, Poucha<sup>22</sup> mentions an old mosque, three hundred years old, and a mausoleum, 'Aitun-Mazar' (Golden Tomb), with interesting ornaments in glazed tiles.

Niya is an important site on the river of that name, where in 1901 Stein found wooden tablets and manuscripts in Kharosthi and Sanskrit, as well as seals and figurines with motifs of Greek origin. Stein visited

<sup>19</sup> *op. cit.*, p. 206.

<sup>20</sup> *ibid.*, p. 214.

<sup>21</sup> *op. cit.*, p. 165.

<sup>22</sup> *op. cit.*, p. 165.

the site again in 1906, and, among other things, found in the ruins of a large building a whole set of Kharosthi records and a cellar with a complete archive.

At Kerriya, under a large Buddhist temple, Stein found a large number of manuscript leaves in Sanskrit, Chinese, and Khotanese, as well as wooden tablets with Tibetan and Khotanese inscriptions, dating from the eighth century.<sup>22</sup>

22 Dabbs, *op. cit.*, pp. 119, 133-4.



128 Dandan-Ulk. Wooden panel (c. 8th century)

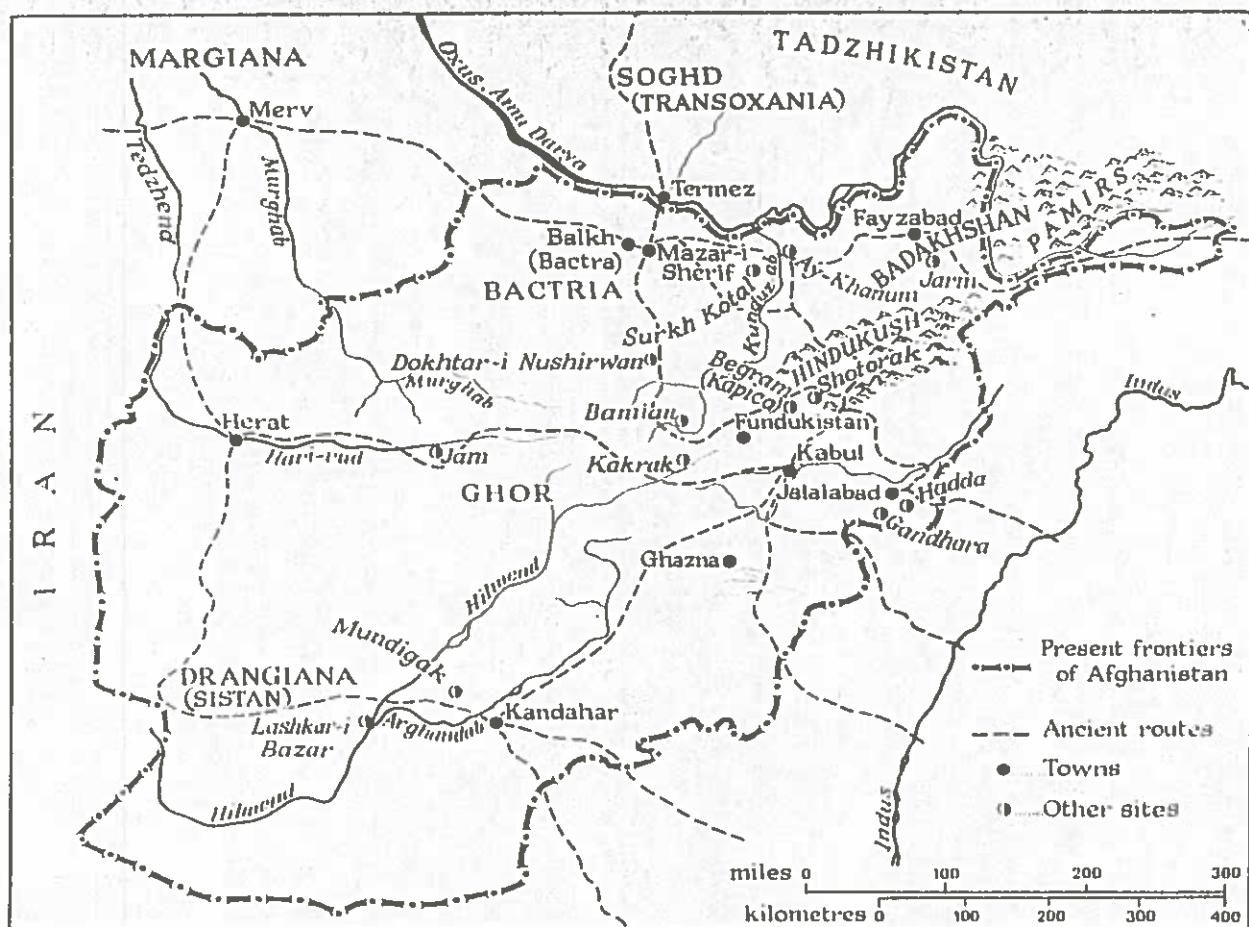
ARNOLD TOYNBEE ONCE CALLED AFGHANISTAN 'a meeting-place in history'. Indeed, the territory of present-day Afghanistan was, throughout its history, a crossroads of important trade-routes which played a similar part here as they did north of the Oxus, in Transoxania. The main trade-route from Samarkand south to the river continued on the other bank to Balkh and further south, through the passes of the Hindu Kush, to Kabul and the valley of the Indus. In Balkh, which is identical with Bactra, the capital of the province of Bactria, this route crossed another, running east-west, which linked Persia with China, using the passes and mountain valleys of the Pamirs, or rather those between the Pamirs and the Transalai range. Another important route linked the cities of southern Persia with Kabul, via Herat.

It is along these routes that most of the archaeological sites and architectural monuments can be found. Archaeology in Afghanistan was by tradition a domain of the French, and French expeditions, led by scholars like Paul Pelliot, Joseph Hackin, Roman Ghirshman, or Daniel Schlumberger, have done some excellent work here. For the purpose of this book, only those sites are mentioned which are either historically or culturally directly connected with Central Asia.

In prehistoric times the civilisation of Anau and Namazga-Tepe in Turkmenia had its counterpart in the Mundigak culture in Afghanistan. The site is 40 miles north-west of Kandahar and may be dated between the end of the fourth millennium and the year 500 B.C., comprising seven successive periods of settlements. It was probably in the third period, between the years 3000 and 2750 B.C., that the Mundigak settlers established links with southern Turkmenia.

Little has been found from the Achaemenid period when, with the campaigns of Cyrus, Afghanistan was brought within the sphere of the Persian Empire. But after the conquest of Alexander, the Graeco-Bactrian kingdom became one of the most important and influential areas of the Hellenistic world. This was the period of cultural interchange between the Greek and Buddhist worlds when such splendid artistic styles were produced as the so-called art of Gandhara. After a

## II Afghanistan



MAP NO. 9 Afghanistan

brief interlude of Scythian (Saka) invasion in the first century B.C., this art continued to flourish under the Kushan dynasty. Afghanistan was the heartland of the Kushan Empire and the royal residences in Begram (Kapica) and Surkh Kotal have yielded a wealth of objects dating from the first century B.C. to the second century A.D. and belonging to the Greek and Kushan periods.

Begram (Kapica), not far north of Kabul, was the capital of the ancient Gandhara, a province occupied by Cyrus, who also destroyed the city. The Kushans built their summer residence here, but the city was again destroyed after the defeat of the Kushan king Vasudeva by the Sasanian king Shapur, in the third century A.D. But in the seventh century, when the Chinese pilgrim Suen-Tsang came here, it was again a metropolis. The Arabs conquered it in A.D. 698 and thus closed the road to Buddhist pilgrims. Most of the Begram finds, bronzes, pottery, glass, ivories, etc., are in the Kabul museum.

Surkh Kotal (first to second centuries A.D.) lies in the valley of a small river, the Kunduzz-ab, a tributary of the Amu Darya. Here amongst other things, were found the ruins of a temple, probably of the fire-worshippers, founded by the Kushan king Kanishka. During the excavation of the monumental temple staircase carried out in 1957 by Schlumberger and his team, an inscription was found which represents probably the most significant post-war archaeological discovery in this part of the world. It contains twenty-five lines of Greek characters and proves beyond doubt that the acropolis of Surkh Kotal was built by King Kanishka. A full interpretation of the text has not yet been published. Statues of clay and limestone were found around the temple square. One of them, fairly well preserved, is a man, probably a king, whose dress consisted of a long gown open in front, of long loose pants tied at the ankles, and of felt shoes. This, on the whole, was a typical dress of the period, worn by Indo-Greeks all over the empire (see above, p. 77).

Grousset<sup>1</sup> suggests that the origins of the art of the Tarim basin at the end of the ancient period and the beginning of the Middle Ages must be sought in Afghanistan. Here, in the valley of Kabul, the last kings of the Kushan dynasty were greatly influenced by Sasanian Persia, as can be seen from the Kushano-Sasanian coins studied by Herzfeld and Hackin. On the borders between India and Persia a whole Sasanian Buddhist civilisation and a Sasanian-Buddhist art were born. Grousset

op. cit., p. 92.